

**Kisholoy Roy, *Women in Indian Advertisements – Plots & Perspectives*, (Lulu.com: 2017), Price: Rs. 275, Pages: 69.**

Reviewed by:

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Dr. Roy has classified the book into two sections viz. Perspectives & Plots. The perspectives section provides an insight into advertisements and advertising. It tries to debunk various myths regarding advertisements by highlighting the ‘asset creating ability’ of advertisements that ‘helps develop brands out of generic products.’ Before advertising, marketers begin with correctly identifying the need gap and developing the products accordingly so as to cater to the requirements of customers. Advertising involves a scientific process that aims to inform consumers about ‘product features and benefits before they make purchases.’

The book also provides a brief study on the evolution of advertising that dates back to in fact 3000 BC in ancient Rome to present. Benjamin Franklin is considered the Father of American Advertising because of his publication Pennsylvania Gazette – newspaper with the largest advertising volume that first appeared in the beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> C. The 20<sup>th</sup> C marked as the “Golden age” for advertising led to the emergence of radio as a popular advertising medium. The ‘1960-1970 decade is considered as the decade of creative revolution in advertising business as three outstanding personalities Leo Burnett, David Ogilvy & William Bernbach spearheaded the creative pursuits in advertising products.’ “Bengal Gazette” was the first Indian newspaper to be started in 1780 in Calcutta, whereas the first advertising agency was started in 1907 in Bombay. ‘Some of the leading ad agencies in the country are JWT, Lowe Lintas, Chaitra Leo Burnett, Contract Advertising, Enterprise Nexus, Euro RSCG, Equus Advertising, FCB-Ulka Advertising, Mudra Communications, McCann Erickson, Ogilvy & Mather, Rediffusion-Young & Rubicam and many more.’

Advertisements are made by advertising agencies and it is the corporate entities known as sponsors or advertisers who engage agencies to develop advertisements for their products. Budget negotiations happen between client servicing team of an agency and the marketing department of an advertiser. And then ‘once an agency receives the creative brief, it is passed on to the creative department of an agency to conceptualize and develop a suitable output.’

The various career options associated with advertising business demand working in an advertising agency. An advertising agency recruits Client service executive or Account executive, Copywriters, Visualizers, Graphic designers, Researchers/Market Researchers, Media Planners, etc.

There are various types of advertisements based on the different parameters used to classify them. Likewise, there are two advertisement types based on the target audience primarily viz. B2C Advertising and B2B Advertising. B2C – Business to Consumer advertising includes ‘four sub categories of advertising viz. National advertising, Local advertising, End-product advertising and Direct response advertising.’ B2B – Business to Business advertising includes ‘four sub categories viz. Trade advertising, Industrial advertising, Professional advertising and Institutional advertising.’

There are three advertisement types based on the nature of product being advertised viz. Goods advertising, Services advertising, and Idea advertising. There are also three advertisement types based on nature of protagonist in an advertisement viz. Advertisement featuring Celebrities (Celebrity Endorsements), Advertisement featuring non-celebrity, and Advertisement featuring products only. Similarly, there are four advertisement types based on type of medium that hosts an advertisement viz. Print advertisement, Broadcast advertisement, Out of Home (Outdoor) advertisement, and Internet advertisement.

The majorly understood role of an advertisement is to promote products in the mass media. However, the roles and responsibilities are not restricted to the world of marketing alone because advertisements do affect society. ‘Advertisements do influence the way a society behaves and defines consumerism.’ So accordingly, advertisements have four major roles – the marketing role, the communication role, the economic role, and the societal role.

Advertising has its roots in marketing and the various aspects of marketing. It is marketing that helps in classifying a heterogeneous market into certain homogeneous segments on the basis of which products are positioned and

advertisements framed. Before advertisements are created by agencies, certain marketing tasks need to be executed so to establish an understanding as for whom advertisement is to be made and what should be the logical message of the advertisement. For instance, one such task is performing a STP analysis that stands for Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning. The various bases of market segmentation are – Geographic, Demographic, Psychographic, Psychological, and some other homogeneous segments. An effective market segment should be Measurable, Accessible, Substantial, Differentiable, and Actionable. Marketers employ strategies and reach out to the segments with their marketing mix elements.

The marketing mix is a tool available with the marketers that enables them to understand the basic strategies they need to develop, to make a product acceptable by customers. McCarthy coined 4Ps of marketing i.e. Product, Price, Place, and Promotion to denote the marketing mix for goods. For services there are three additional Ps i.e. People, Process, and Physical evidence. Advertising does not function in isolation, advertising needs to be integrated with the other strategies employed in the marketing mix. ‘Advertising is basically a part of Promotion and Promotion is one of the components of marketing mix.’ The function of advertising is to ‘build a brand,’ and that takes time and a lot of effort. There are different types of advertising done for the different phases/stages of a product. ‘The Product Life Cycle (PLC) comprises four stages through which a product passes viz. Introduction, Growth, Maturity, and Decline.’ The advertisement types based on PLC are – Pioneering advertising, Competitive and Comparative advertising, and Reminder advertising. Apart from all these communication process also need to be aptly managed so that the message reaches the audience without any sort of distortion.

When we talk about Gender and Advertising, we take into consideration the performance of certain roles based on gender. Gender is a social construct and so is the division of labor based on gender, a stereotype regarding women’s role to be cleaning, nurturing, cooking etc. When advertisements are made considering the changes brought in by various feminist movements and changing government roles, they are categorized as path-breaking advertisements.

In the Plots section of the book Roy presents a very interesting analysis of some advertisements that show women as free-wheeler, in control of the affairs and more so as participants in sharing public space with men.